



Altadena Historical Society

From our Files

September 15, 2011

Altadena's first historian Sarah Noble Ives



" In the late 1930's a very lovely little old lady trudged up and down the streets of Altadena ringing doorbells. Her name was Sara Noble Ives and her house-to-house canvassing was not to sell books, but to gather information to write a book and the History of Altadena was born." - Mrs. Clara T. Johnson, personal journal, property of AHS

Sarah Noble Ives and her three sisters purchased two lots and a cottage "sight unseen" on the southeast corner of Mariposa Street and Maiden Lane in 1924. Originally from Grosse Ile, Michigan near Detroit, the Ives sisters retired to California. Like a lot of mid-westerners who migrated to the area in the 1920's, they enjoyed the mild climate and the beauty of our mountains. All of the sisters were active in community affairs, but Sarah, already a noted artist and published author, is best known because she was Altadena's first historian.

The Altadena Historical Society founded in 1935 by Mrs. Frederick Marsh asked Sarah to compile our first history, which was published in 1938. It tells the story of our community as the orange groves and poppy fields gradually gave way to the mansions and bungalows.

Born in 1864, Sarah attended Mrs. Edna Chafee Noble's Training School for Elocution and Literature in Detroit. Mrs. Chafee, a suffragette and educator, became a mentor, foster parent, and role model for Sarah. After continuing her education in New York and Paris, Sarah returned to the U. S. and began her career as a free-lance illustrator and author, using the name Noble Ives. Her works were published in the *Sun*, *Herald Tribune* and *McClure's syndicate*. One of her more popular children's storybooks, *Dogs of Many Lands* is still available. Landscape paintings were her specialty and two are in the collection of the Altadena Public Library. She is the author of numerous children's stories and books of poetry, including *Songs of the Shining Way*. Sara Noble Ives died in November, 1944.

A walking tour of East Mariposa Street on Sunday, October 23, 2011, from 10 am to 4 pm, will include docent-led tours of this home as well as a tour of the fully restored, 1912 craftsman home of the Chamberlain family. Histories of the Markam house, Neustadt/McClintock house, and a Charles & Henry Greene designed cottage will be featured. Tickets: \$15 for members, \$25 for non-members and \$25 at the door.

To purchase tickets go to <http://altadenahistoricalsocietytour.eventbrite.com/> or call 626-797-8016 or send a check to Altadena Historical Society Tour, 730 E. Altadena Drive, Altadena, CA 91001
AltadenaHistoricalSociety.org